

time you have been here—you certainly have hit the ground running and have shown who you are and whose you are. So thank you, again, so much.

And to, of course, our co-chair, Mr. LIEU, let me just say thank you for your clarity of purpose and making sure that—yourself and Mr. NEGUSE—making sure that the truth is told. And oftentimes, we forget that the truth shall set you free. But I always marvel at you, Congressman LIEU, and Mr. NEGUSE, especially when you are on the media. You don't pull any punches. You tell the truth; you cut through all the noise. And I think the American people deserve that. Thank you both for that, and thank you for giving us a chance to be with you this evening.

Mr. Speaker I rise also with my colleagues to highlight the fact that House Democrats have delivered for the people in the first 200 days of this Congress. House Democrats and the Biden administration have begun building back bolder. We have helped tackle this virus head on by putting shots in people's arms, and money in people's pockets.

And, yes, to address the crisis of poverty in this country, the American Rescue Plan expanded and improved the child tax credit, which I had the honor of working with my colleagues, Congresswoman LUCILLE ROYBAL-ALLARD, and our chair of the Committee on Appropriations, Congresswoman ROSA DELAURIO, to establish the foundation for this.

This benefit has made a significant impact on the lives of hundreds of thousands of struggling families, especially for communities of color. In my district alone, the newly improved tax credit will directly benefit 108,600 children. That's in the Golden State of California. Child poverty is about the highest in the country. And it will lift over 10,000 children out of poverty. Now, for the people, we must make it permanent.

Mr. Speaker, let me just say that Democrats, we rescued Republicans. There were zero—mind you—zero Republican votes, as my colleagues have said over and over again, for the creation, for example, of 3 million jobs, for investing \$130 billion to help schools reopen safely. There were zero Republican votes for the child tax credit and for putting money into the pockets of American families who, through no fault of their own, have been living on the edge, struggling to survive, begging for help.

Well guess what? Democrats delivered for everyone; everyone, regardless of their party affiliation, regardless of who they voted for, or even if they didn't vote. And, yes, some Republicans, they have the audacity to tout these benefits as if they supported them. But you know what? That is okay. That is okay. We are delivering for the people regardless.

And, yes, African Americans and people of color were disproportionately impacted by the coronavirus, and we

made certain that equity and funding for low-income and vulnerable communities and low-wealth populations were targeted and included.

Now, last time I looked, Republicans also have many constituents who face socioeconomic and racial bias and have had a difficult time just surviving because of systemic racism and economic inequality. Republicans have constituents who have faced these adversities; we do also. But guess what? Republicans did not step up. We did.

Mr. Speaker, I hope now that the public understands who is on their side. You all are making it very clear. I hope the public really understands what this is about and really who is standing with them.

Mr. Speaker, we must continue to build back better and bolder, and I sincerely hope that these efforts will be bipartisan. For after all, we were elected to represent and support our constituents. Not abandon them, mind you, in the time of need.

So, yes, I am proud to have helped minority leader, for instance, MCCARTHY's constituents. I am proud to have helped Senator MCCONNELL's constituents. But I hope that they recognize that the benefits that extended to them during this unprecedented pandemic, I hope they will recognize and rethink the importance of working for the people.

Again, I am very proud to have supported the American Rescue Plan regardless of party affiliation. And I am very pleased that we were able to take care of our colleagues' constituents when they wouldn't.

Mr. NEGUSE. Mr. Speaker, I, again, thank the gentlewoman from California, and I certainly could not have said it any better, because we were proud to take the steps that were necessary to help constituents across the country.

The problems, the challenges that we face as a country don't discriminate on political lines or jurisdictional lines. We don't focus on helping Republican communities or Democratic communities. American communities, that is who we are here to help; American families, the American people.

Mr. Speaker, Social Security was created over 80 years ago. And I was at an event earlier today. As we talked about the child tax credit, I was joined by my colleague, Mr. LIEU. And Senator BOOKER was so eloquent as he described the child tax credit program, in particular, as a new Social Security for kids, for children.

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So that every child in the United States has the opportunity to succeed and live the American Dream, that is what it is all about. The stories that you heard from my colleagues today, that is who we are helping. The single mother in Broomfield, Colorado, who is trying to make ends meet. The working family in Texas, California, Iowa, Nebraska, Seattle, or Florida trying to

find the resources to pay for childcare, to put food on the table, to pay their mortgage, that is what the child tax credit is all about.

Mr. Speaker, 200 days, 200 days of progress. I am proud of the work. My colleague, Mr. LIEU, is proud of the work that House Democrats have done in partnership with President Biden; the work that Representative AXNE has done to fight for farmers in Iowa; the work that Representative HARDER has done to increase appropriations for firefighting in the Western United States, as we are besieged by wildfires; the work that Representative DELGADO did to secure local community support for the smallest cities, towns, and municipalities in rural America.

Money in pockets, shots in arms, children in schools, and people in jobs. Mr. Speaker, 200 days, and we are just getting started.

Mr. Speaker, I yield back the balance of my time.

ADDRESSING SOUTHERN BORDER CRISIS

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under the Speaker's announced policy of January 4, 2021, the Chair recognizes the gentleman from Wisconsin (Mr. GROTHMAN) for 30 minutes.

Mr. GROTHMAN. Mr. Speaker, I would like to address the crisis we have on our southern border.

Last week, I was fortunate enough to go with three other Congressmen to see the Rio Grande Valley sector, and I want to educate the American public, as well as my colleagues, as to what I saw down there. It is my personal belief that it is the biggest crisis that we are facing today.

First of all, let's just look at the raw numbers. In June, we have had contact with 190,000 people at the border. Now, a lot of those are turned around. We do not know, because the numbers are not yet available, how many are let in the country, but we believe about 16,000 children who were unaccompanied by an adult are let in; we believe about 24,000 other family members are let in; and we believe about 30,000 people who are not touched by the Border Patrol and who are sneaking across the line are let in.

So, we believe that more than 70,000 people, who we did not pick and did not vet, were let in America in June, as opposed to about 6,000 people last June. That is kind of a dramatic change, 6,000 to 70,000 people.

Normally, this time of year, by the way, those numbers are falling, but they went up in June compared to May. Why? Normally, it is hot this time of year, and people are less likely to travel south of the border, but more people are coming up here.

I have been down to the border four times this year, and things are different from sector to sector. The Rio Grande Valley sector is that which borders the Gulf of Mexico. I want to point out that, there, people are coming from

countries you would expect, primarily Honduras, then Guatemala, then Mexico, then El Salvador, although other countries like Haiti, Ecuador, or Cuba are also in the top 10, a little bit different than other regions where Brazil led the way or where Russia was very close to the top.

I want to point out that according to the Border Patrol agents I talked to, frequently, these people are not necessarily starving or poor, with the exception of Venezuela and Cuba, where they have had to put up with socialist Marxist governments. They appear well fed. Some of them, particularly from Cuba or Europe, are actually, judging by their clothes or the purses they have, relatively well off.

I stood on the border in a path between the Rio Grande River and where you check in with the Border Patrol. During the 45 minutes I stood there, again and again and again clumps of people, 15 people, 45 people, 25 people, were coming across. They were rather jolly, despite the fact that I was standing next to a Border Patrol agent. That did not intimidate them. They knew that, under our new laws, they would be escorted in. They just smiled, waved, and were completely happy.

They knew that they would wind up being looked at, at the border. That is why people just kept coming, until 3 o'clock in the morning, as one of my colleagues saw.

What other comments can I make about watching this huge sea of humanity cross the border? It is strengthening the cartels. I do not know if I believe it, but a Border Patrol agent told me that he felt the Mexican cartels are now making more money escorting people across the American border than they are from drugs. I can't document that. That is just what I was told.

If you have to come across the border, if you come across the Rio Grande, people have to realize, you do not get to come across unless you deal with the drug cartels. They will charge someone from Mexico about \$3,000; from Central America, about \$5,000; from Brazil—and these are all about—you negotiate your own price with the cartels, maybe \$10,000.

I didn't see anybody coming from China, but our tour guides at the Rio Grande Valley said it was not uncommon to get people from China. They may be paying up to \$20,000.

You get different trips. When you come up from Central America, first of all, you are escorted toward a place near the border between Mexico and Central America. Then, you pay to get from a gathering place there to a gathering place just south of the American border. Then, you are escorted to the Rio Grande River and over the Rio Grande River. Maybe for a higher quality trip, it might cost you \$12,000 to get a better boat, that sort of thing, as you worked your way north.

You have to pay. We recently heard a story from the Border Patrol in which somebody from Ecuador refused to pay.

He felt like he could just come across the border. The gangs just killed him on the spot, boom. That is the type of thing you are dealing with.

A lot of sexual assaults, so as our Border Patrol interviews people, they try to do something about it. But, obviously, given the hodgepodge nature of the border, I think very rarely are they able to catch the assailant.

To give you a further idea of how difficult it is, people might say: Why does the Border Patrol not intercept the boat coming across the Rio Grande? Because what the drug cartels will do if there is a little child on the boat, and there is frequently a little child, they will just throw that child in the river, knowing full well that the U.S. Border Patrol, being compassionate Americans, will help that 1-year-old or 3-year-old child to safety rather than go after the drug cartel or the person working for the drug cartel, escorting people across the border. I was told again today, talking to our Border Patrol, that is very common, that they would throw a little child in the river.

Kind of an interesting thing, if you watch these people come across, it is so automatic that, nowadays, they get a little wristband, like you might get at a county fair. That wristband varies depending upon the quality of trip you are going to get, as well as which gang is escorting you across. It is just done automatically.

Like I said, you come to the southern border of Mexico. Then, you take a plane, train, or bus through Mexico and enter another gathering place just south of the border. You are escorted to the river, and then escorted on a boat across. Like I said, depending on the quality of the trip, \$3,000, or from Asia, \$20,000—a very difficult thing.

The next thing we learned down there, you might think: What does Mexico think about the new policies implemented by the United States? Of course, the biggest policy is that we got rid of the migrant protection program, where people who were going to ask for asylum had to stay south of the border. For whatever reason, the Biden administration decided to get rid of that.

Since then, the Border Patrol agents I talked to felt they were getting less cooperation with Mexico. They are still getting cooperation, but it frayed the very good cooperation we had with the Mexican border patrol 6 months ago because the attitude of the Mexican border patrol themselves or the police themselves is: Why should I risk my life taking on the drug gangs when the Americans on the other side don't really seem to care about protecting their own border?

The next thing to point out, that I didn't know looking at TV, is it is not unusual at all to have people come here without their own ID. Without their own ID, of course, you have to take their word for it, as to who they are. You can't do criminal background checks like you want to do.

Bizarrely, even without an ID, the wonderful American taxpayer will fly you or bus you wherever you want to go in the United States. When I left that area, in the McAllen airport, I saw people with manila envelopes. On the envelope, it says: "I do not speak English," but it gives directions as to where you should go.

As we talked to some of the immigrants coming across, they knew where they wanted to go. "I want to go to Chicago." "I want to go to New York." "I want to go to Louisiana." So, we dutifully put the instructions on the manila envelope, without ID, and they are allowed to get on the airlines without ID, something that none of us could do, and we take them wherever they want to go.

The next comment I will have is people talk about keeping families together. Under the current system, as we open up the border, we see not a small number of children all alone in what I can only describe as cages. I would say they are maybe 20 feet by 20 feet with maybe eight kids in there all under the age of 5, or another fencing area with kids who are older than that crowded together, maybe 10 to 13. They are, obviously, kids. We do let kids in who claim to be under 18 who almost certainly aren't. But in any event, it is kind of heartbreaking to see these little kids under the age of 5 sitting on mats, asleep at 10 in the morning without any adults to accompany them, without their parents to accompany them.

Now, you might say: What are they doing here? Bizarrely, I think, parents will send their kids north to live with an aunt and uncle or gram or grandpa or whatever, and they put the address and the name of the people on their T-shirts or with something the kids are carrying. Then, the kids show the Border Patrol their T-shirts, and the United States sends the kids to a non-profit organization that takes them to New York, Baltimore, or wherever.

It frustrates the Border Patrol because, of course, in the United States, if we knew parents who just wrote on a 3-year-old's shirt "take Johnny to 123 Elm Street in Los Angeles, California," and dropped him off at the airport, those parents would be getting a call from social services.

But here, in dealing with immigrants, we don't consider that unusual at all. "Oh, Johnny, we are supposed to find a way to take you from McAllen to 123 Elm Street in West Bend, Wisconsin." Why? We have no problem doing that. It is just something that bothers the Border Patrol and bothers me as well.

The next thing to think about, something new that the Border Patrol sees, and I am a big advocate for those people who are born with different abilities, but it is apparent to the Border Patrol that, more recently, they are getting kids who they wonder if they are coming from orphanages, who have different abilities than the rest of us—

you could say special needs. We are seeing more of that come across the border.

Of course, America is a very wonderful country, and we do take these kids in. I am sure we will find special programs for them. But I think it ought to be openly discussed if we are seeing a new trend of countries south of the border feeling that it is up to the United States to care for this population.

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I am going to comment a little bit on the people they call got-aways. Obviously, if you have so many young kids who are being processed here, Mr. Speaker, the Border Patrol has to spend a lot of time filling out paperwork and interviewing these folks.

What happens when the Border Patrol is filling out paperwork and changing diapers? They don't have time to guard the border.

As a result, we have heard in certain sectors the Border Patrol is at one half the number of people they want on the border, which is why this time last year they had about 6,000 got-aways sneaking in every month, and now there are 30,000 got-aways sneaking in every month.

A discussion of what I learned at the border is incomplete without talking about the drugs that are coming across the border. Ever since I have had this job, we have talked about the number of people who are dying in this country by illegal drug overdoses. I think after a while people's eyes tend to glaze over, and they may not be aware that in the last 6 or 7 years the number of people dying in this country has doubled.

When I first got this job, it was about 45,000 a year, and I was just stunned at 45,000. It is not that far away from the number of people who died fighting in Vietnam, and every year that many people die of drug overdoses in this country. It has doubled. It is now up to 90,000 a year.

When I talked to the local DEA agent in Milwaukee, he told me that he felt the drugs from all of the overdoses in Milwaukee County—which at the time was 540 a year—probably came across the southern border. Just like every other member of law enforcement in Wisconsin, they wonder what we are doing in Washington to prevent these drugs from coming across the southern border.

Why is there such a big increase?

I think two things: First of all, more drugs are coming across the border. As marijuana becomes legalized in more and more States and grown legally in more States, there is a speculation that the drug gangs who, after all, make money selling drugs, are shifting from marijuana to harder drugs.

Secondly, the current drug of choice, the drug that is being used by these horrible cartels—and by the way, we ought to put more of these people in prison, not less—the type of drugs that

are being brought across by these cartels is fentanyl.

I had always thought that heroin was about the most dangerous thing you could take, Mr. Speaker. Fentanyl is much more dangerous than heroin, which is why I recently talked to a district attorney in my district, and in his area there were as many people who died from drug overdoses last year as the 3 prior years combined. It is what we see as the young people shift or older people shift from heroin to fentanyl on purpose or not on purpose, because frequently the fentanyl is put in with the heroin.

So if we care about the 90,000 people who are dying every year in this country of illegal overdoses and we think about the poor families who lose their loved ones and wonder what we are going to do, it seems that a minimum part of the response has to be to respond at the border.

One more time, it seems like we are going in the opposite direction. We are doing less at the border. More people are coming across, and more people coming across means more fentanyl; more fentanyl coming across means more fentanyl-laced heroin; and more fentanyl-laced heroin means more people dying and more broken hearts of the families of the people who are dying.

So what can I recommend to the wonderful Congressman in the Chair?

First of all, I will ask the Biden administration not to get rid of title 42. That is the section that allows the Border Patrol to turn people around because of fear of COVID. There are rumors that the use of title 42 is soon going to be dropped by the Biden administration. Perhaps the uptick in COVID will cause them not to do it. But as I said, already we have 70,000 people a month crossing the border, and if the word gets out that we are no longer going to turn away single adults or families with kids over the age of 7 who are right now being turned around because of COVID, that 70,000-a-month figure is going to shoot up even more.

Secondly, with regard to COVID right now, the Border Patrol checks people, but they only check people if they have a temperature of at least 99; otherwise, they just send them on—which includes a lot of asymptomatic people—to the nongovernmental organizations who take these people next.

If they test positive there, then these organizations put them up in hotels or apartments.

But because they are here illegally and they want to get inland to America, what do the people with COVID do once they are placed in a hotel or placed in an apartment?

They leave right away. So, right now, as a practical matter the policy of the Biden administration of people who come here—I am not talking about unvaccinated people, I am talking about people who literally have COVID—the response of this country is we let them in. I would beg the Biden

administration to do something about that concern.

So keep or expand title 42 so people can't get here because of COVID. And, secondly, when people test positive for COVID, don't let them out. That is kind of opposite of the whole story we are getting from the President.

The third thing I would like to ask the President to do—and I made this request, I think it was 3 weeks ago now—please put someone other than Vice President HARRIS in charge of the border. She went down to the El Paso sector. She did a few-hour perfunctory check.

I can tell you, Mr. Speaker, I learn so much more every time I am down there, and usually I stay down there a couple days each. Every sector of the southern border is different, and there are nine sectors there. I happened to be in the Rio Grande sector this time. It is very different from what you learn in the Tucson sector, Mr. Speaker, and very different from what you learn in the San Diego sector.

Please, President Biden, pick someone who either has a zeal to control the southern border or at least is personally responsible enough to go down there and do something. Because I will tell you, Mr. Speaker, that 70,000 figure now up from 6,000 a year ago is going to do nothing but grow; and if you ever get rid of title 42, it is going to rocket up through the roof. I don't think there is any country—particularly a country with a generous welfare state like we have—who can survive purely open borders.

So there is your primer, Mr. Speaker, for all the people fortunate enough to be in the room and fortunate to be listening at all.

I beg President Biden to take the border more seriously, and I beg the media of this country to take the border more seriously. I do not think anything that the government does or does not do is more significant than what happens with the 70,000 people who are coming across the border today, and what I believe will happen as soon as the weather gets a little cooler and it becomes more apparent to people around the world, soon that number is going to go from 70 to 80 to 90 to 100 and maybe significantly more than that.

Mr. Speaker, I am grateful for the time, and I yield back the balance of my time.

HUMAN RIGHTS ACROSS THE GLOBE

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under the Speaker's announced policy of January 4, 2021, the Chair recognizes the gentlewoman from Texas (Ms. JACKSON LEE) for 30 minutes.

Ms. JACKSON LEE. Mr. Speaker, it is always important to have an opportunity to speak to our colleagues and as well the American people. Tonight, I will dwell on questions of human rights, challenges to those human